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CONTACT: Linda Piotrowicz, 860-713-2558
Linda.Piotrowicz@ct.gov

State Seeks Public Input on Regional Market Redevelopment

Connecticut residents asked to weigh in on food hub planning project

(HARTFORD, CONN.) The Connecticut departments of Agriculture and Administrative Services are seeking public input on a master plan for the redevelopment of the [Hartford Regional Market](#). They have posted an [online survey](#) at www.CTGrown.gov and are collecting feedback through December 4, 2013.

“The Hartford Regional Market has served the state and the region for six decades as a critical food and farm products hub,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steven K. Reviczky. “Its 1940s infrastructure is worn out and failing. The time is ripe to not just repair but revolutionize the facility so it may serve current and future needs of our dynamic farm and food system and expand its contributions to the area’s economy and workforce.”

As the largest perishable food distribution center between Boston and New York, the 32-acre state-owned facility plays a significant role in local and regional food security. Along with 230,386 square feet of aggregation, processing, and distribution space and an active railroad spur, it houses Connecticut’s only wholesale farmers’ market—a 144-stall, open-air, year-round public marketplace that attracts tens of thousands of customers each year—and provides 450 jobs and \$165 million in annual gross sales to the state’s economy.

To guide wise and strategic investment, the Department of Agriculture has teamed with the Department of Administrative Services’ Division of Construction Services on creation of a master plan for the facility. After a national solicitation for proposals and careful review, the agencies selected Market Ventures, Inc., of Portland, Maine, to develop the master plan with a team of local subconsultants that includes the S/L/A/M Collaborative, Milone & MacBroom, and Vanderweil Engineers. Market Ventures is considered the country’s most experienced planner of public and farmers’ market facilities.

“Technologies have advanced exponentially since the original market was constructed, vastly changing the way food is processed and handled,” said Administrative Services Deputy Commissioner Pasquale J. Salemi, who oversees the Construction Services Division. “We look forward to working with this team to develop a state-of-the-art facility that will serve residents and businesses of central Connecticut for generations to come.”

Commissioner Reviczky has challenged the consultant team to conceptualize the finest regional food hub in the country. Among ideas being considered as part of the plan is creation of a year-round, indoor public market facility to complement the existing outdoor farmers’ market. The indoor market would provide stall space for independent, locally owned farms and other businesses to sell a diversity of fresh and prepared foods. With an emphasis on Connecticut Grown products, the market could supplement with goods from surrounding states to provide a comprehensive selection.

To ensure the design strategy meets the needs of consumers, the planning team has created an on-line survey to gather input. The survey, which is available in both English and Spanish, can be accessed from the Department of Agriculture’s website, www.CTGrown.gov, under “Featured Links.”

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